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ABSTRACT

This guide to departmental planning in British secondary school modern language programs offers suggestions for producing effective work and curriculum plans. An introductory section outlines the reasons for departmental planning and discusses briefly the format and content of effective staff meetings. The second section addresses common administrative and instructional issues in the implementation of Britain's complex national curriculum and proposes a gradual approach to implementation by identification of priorities and setting of realistic planning targets. Section 3 begins this process with a method of planning for departmental development, including sample short- and medium-to-long-term plans and specific related activities. Sections 4 and 5 provide outlines of: (1) policy considerations for staff assignment and workloads; and (2) the statutory features of the national curriculum that must be incorporated into curriculum planning. The next section describes and illustrates a method of curriculum evaluation, including appropriate forms, and, finally, section 7 discusses planning for course content not specified for modern languages in the national curriculum in greater detail. Appropriate forms are provided and related preparatory activities are described. (MSE)

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Departmental planning and schemes of work

Clive Hurren

FL 020 666

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Departmental planning and schemes of work

Clive Hurren

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Introduction

It could be argued that the need for modern languages departments to plan effectively has never been greater than it is today.

- ★ Schemes of work have been statutory for some time now, and parents and others with a genuine interest in the running of the school have the right to see them.

- ★ With an increasing focus on inspection of schools there is a need for documentation which will help to give a clearer picture of the work of the department.

- ★ Teachers now face the National Curriculum with its statutory Programmes of Study (PoS) and Attainment Targets (ATs) and the obligation to provide evidence to parents and others of pupils' achievements.

But all of this makes planning seem a chore and something which needs to be done because of outside pressures. This book hopes to show that, on the contrary, departmental planning is an **essential** part of teaching and that all pupils and teachers stand to gain from an approach which is carefully thought out and cohesively delivered.

It suggests ideas and tasks which will help in producing effective schemes of work, and it presents a series of activities which will enable departments to prepare thoroughly for the National Curriculum.

1. Why is departmental planning so important?

Good departments have always met regularly and planned their work carefully. Whilst teachers often complain of 'meeting fatigue' or of too many new initiatives, it cannot be denied that planning the curriculum at departmental level and, of course, within the overall curriculum framework of the school, remains one of the most important tasks teachers undertake. For it is in this area that most benefit is likely to accrue to pupils.

Planning has several important benefits:

- ★ it allows departments to teach the curriculum much more cohesively, and with a commonality of approach, and thus facilitates access for all pupils to the opportunities to which they are entitled;
- ★ it enhances staff development by allowing all teachers to be involved in the running of the department and to contribute their opinions and ideas;
- ★ staff can build on their strengths, for example by training others, and they can identify and hopefully improve on their weak points by working collaboratively;
- ★ teachers can share expertise, resources ... and problems. Individual workloads and anxiety can be much reduced;
- ★ a structured, shared approach can be of great benefit to teachers such as probationers, part-timers and non-specialists;
- ★ the National Curriculum will demand a degree of accountability and comparability of standards, which can only be achieved by joint planning;
- ★ by planning carefully the department is better able to evaluate its work and to find ways of improving its performance.

It goes without saying that time needs to be found for departments to meet regularly. It is suggested that there should be a departmental meeting at least once a fortnight or every three weeks.

Some departments are fortunate to have a timetabled period when all teachers can meet together, though this is often inadequate for the purpose of discussing and working on major themes. Nonetheless, Heads of Department should continue to press senior managers to provide such a slot, which can then be supplemented as necessary by further meetings, perhaps at lunch-times or after school. It may be possible to use directed time for this purpose. The constructive use of non-contact training days is also to be recommended.

Format and content of meetings

Several meetings over a long period of time will be needed to produce the scheme of work or adapt it to fit the National Curriculum.

Every third meeting might be used for discussion of the everyday minutiae of departmental running - school examinations, setting, discussion of individual pupils, and so on.

Other meetings will need to concentrate on discussion or development of the major National Curriculum issues, as identified in the next section. There might be **workshops** for the joint production of materials or ideas, or **in-service** sessions in which department members with particular strengths (such as the use of the target language) train their colleagues, or to which outside agencies (e.g. adviser, advisory teacher) are invited to contribute.

There should be regular discussions on **classroom methodology**.

Wherever possible, meetings should have an **agenda** and should produce agreed **outcomes** or **targets** for the department as a whole and as appropriate for individual teachers.

It is a good idea to take **brief minutes** of the main points of meetings and to distribute these to interested parties - Head, senior management team, governors, adviser. This should ensure that targets agreed are adhered to, and also serves to inform senior colleagues of departmental progress and thinking, which may help to influence school policy subsequently.

Meetings which have a formal structure like this (however informal the actual proceedings - I know of a department which meets in the local pub every Friday lunchtime!) are likely to be much more effective than ad hoc meetings, those called at irregular intervals, or those called merely to resolve a crisis.

For small departments with only one or two teachers, the process is just as important, but often more difficult. Wherever possible, such departments should try to get together with colleagues from other schools and should call on LEA or other support services for assistance.

2. National Curriculum planning

The implementation of the National Curriculum raises many questions which departments will need to address. The following are amongst the more important ones; some of these will be tackled later in these pages; others are dealt with elsewhere in the PATHFINDER series, or may be found in the 'non-statutory guidance' from the National Curriculum Council.

- ★ The programmes of study seem to demand an enormous amount from teachers and pupils. How will we fit it all in? How do we ensure adequate coverage of the PoS and ATs?
- ★ How will we raise standards of performance across the board to meet the requirements?
- ★ How will we cope without a defined-content syllabus? What content do we need?
- ★ What are the implications for classroom practice?
- ★ How can we increase use of the foreign language? (See PATHFINDER *On target*)
- ★ How will we provide differentiation to ensure that each pupil is working at an appropriate level?
- ★ How will we assess and record the pupils' work?
- ★ How can we best help pupils with special educational needs?
- ★ How will we deliver 'one language across all five years'? How do we measure progression and continuity?
- ★ What is the place of the second foreign language?
- ★ How can we obtain breadth and balance across the areas of experience and the opportunities listed in Part I of the PoS?
- ★ What should we do in key stage 4? How will we prepare the ground for all pupils to continue learning a language in years 10 and 11?
- ★ How will we staff KS4? What price Model B?
- ★ How will we deal with cross-curricular issues and creativity?

DON'T PANIC !

Despite what appears to be a list of frightening complexity and weight, there is absolutely no need to panic or to think about early retirement! Many departments and teachers are already addressing these issues, and the National Curriculum aims to build on current good practice.

Equally, the programmes of study and attainment targets will be introduced progressively, starting with year 7 in 1992, so it is possible for departments to plan National Curriculum coverage one year at a time, and always a year ahead. Ideally, of course, good National Curriculum practice with year 7 pupils will be extended up the school as time, energy and resources allow, but the statutory obligation to introduce the National Curriculum requirements to older children advances only one year at a time, through till 1996/97.

It should be noted, however, that if schools are to adopt the recommended pattern of a single language across all five years (11-16) - and in terms of continuity and progression this clearly makes much sense - then the scheme of work for year 7 will obviously have knock-on effects throughout the school. Departments will therefore need to consider, from an early stage, what kind of National Curriculum courses they may want or be able to offer in KS4 to pupils continuing the study of a foreign language who otherwise might not have done so. GCSE is the obvious option, but may not be appropriate for everyone. Other courses, including vocational syllabuses, will eventually come on stream.

Schools should also be aware that to implement a reform of the scale of the National Curriculum takes time. Few will get it absolutely right first time. There will be a period of trial and error; many teachers will need to adapt their methodology; some schools may not immediately have the resources to meet all the requirements of the programmes of study; others may struggle to find suitably qualified staff.

Schools should, of course, try to meet the spirit of the law and should endeavour to provide all children with their statutory entitlement (the PoS and ATs) from the appropriate implementation dates.

In any case, there are important questions of assessment, parental expectations, reporting, and even (whisper it!) inspection to be taken into account in all this, and schools will want to do the best by their pupils.

The message remains the same, however:

DON'T PANIC !

It will be better to tackle a few issues well than a lot badly. It is important, therefore, to identify **priority targets** and to work towards these gradually.

3. Departmental development plans

One way to identify priorities and set realistic targets is to prepare a departmental development plan.

This might consist of two sides of A4. It sets out the department's priorities over the next year/two years and gives brief details of how the targets will be achieved and over what time-scale. It will focus on the department's INSET needs and can be a useful tool for informing and influencing senior management.

The formulation of a departmental development plan should form the basis of an early meeting. Plans should, of course, link in closely with school development plans.

An example of a departmental development plan is shown on pages 7 and 8.

The plan is designed to represent where a typical department might be in the run-up to implementation of the National Curriculum. Some departments, of course, will have progressed well beyond this stage, whereas others will not yet have reached it.

The departmental development plan is a useful planning instrument - priorities are clearly identified and **realistic** targets are set, within a realistic time-scale. It is important, too, to ensure that everyone has a part to play in meeting the targets; individual and collective responsibilities are therefore given prominence. In deciding on these, it will be necessary to ensure that the workload is equitably shared and that where possible the tasks allocated build upon individual strengths.

Copies of the plan should be given to all teachers concerned, and especially to the Head, the senior management team, governors, and the LEA adviser/inspector.

Apart from time-scale, which we have mentioned, one very important element is missing from this plan. Can you spot it?

The answer is at the foot of the page, but think about it before you look!

Answer: The department has omitted to say how it will evaluate its work and its progress, how well it has met its targets. This is clearly a crucial factor, for it leads on to review and the setting of future targets.

The Mouton Rothschild Grant Maintained School, PLC (Approved)

Headteacher: E Cresson

Departmental Development Plan (Modern Languages)

CURRENT SITUATION

Some coverage of NC PoS already achieved.
Gaps identified with 'Awareness of language' and 'Developing cultural awareness'.
Most areas of experience covered, but depth lacking in E and F.
Creativity and imagination missing almost completely.

Special needs children adapting well to FL learning, but with Graded Tests/NPRA; a concern.

KS4: take-up rate currently 43%. Need to extend compulsory FL to all at earliest opportunity.

SHORT TERM, 1992/93

Priorities:

- Develop new year 7 scheme of work to ensure adequate coverage of NC PoS and ATs; phase out Graded Tests, but ensure that SEN pupils are not disadvantaged (Rev. Green, HOD).
- Devise activities for use with present Y7 (and throughout the school as time allows) which allow coverage of those areas of experience and opportunities defined above; in particular, examine ways of introducing creativity (Rev. Green, Mrs Smith).
- Increase use of FL (Mr Brown).
- Devise suitable assessment schemes (Rev. Green, Ms Jones).
- Devise activities/purchase materials to allow for greater differentiation according to ability (all).
- Research suitable courses for use with KS4 continuers; prepare the ground carefully for all children to continue from 1993.
- Monitor NC coverage of other years.

Resource needs

2 OHPs
Listening stations
New NC text books
Valium
Pencil and paper (for SATs)

INSET needs

Use of FL
Teacher assessment, plus reporting and recording (NB: at least one training day will be needed for this)
Differentiation

Meetings

Every second Tuesday, 3.30 - 4.45

MEDIUM AND LONG TERM, 1993-95

Priorities:

- Maintain NC through into Y8 and 9, ensuring that all years receive entitlement as per PoS.
- Implement FL for all in KS4, 1993, and monitor. Aim for 10% of time for all.
- Continue to seek ways to allow pupils greater autonomy/develop flexible learning methods.
- Develop further staff and pupil expertise in IT.
- Develop reading schemes.
- Introduce NC PoS and ATs to German 2FL (Mr King).
- Further work on teacher assessment and SATs, GCSE.

Resource needs

Staffing: 0.4 extra teacher required from September 1993, rising to 0.8 in 1994.

Other: 1 computer per room, plus printer, modem.
New NC text books for Y8/Y9, plus supplementary materials.
Readers.
Flexible learning materials.

Projected INSET needs

IT
Flexible learning
Teaching them all at KS4
Assessment
Crisis management

ACTIVITY 1

Produce a departmental development plan for your department. Set aside 1¼ - 1½ hours for this. Appoint a scribe who will undertake to have the plan printed and copied.

Short-term targets

★ *Altogether*: make a brief statement of the current state of play of the department.

★ *In pairs* (if possible): brainstorm the major issues which need to be addressed for National Curriculum implementation.

Now compare these with other colleagues' suggestions.

★ *As a team*: identify a **maximum** of five targets which you feel the department can realistically meet this year. Some of these may already be in progress.

- Decide who will take responsibility for each target, bearing in mind the need for collaborative teamwork on some issues, the need to support new or inexperienced teachers, and so on.
- Define the time-scales within which each target should be completed.
- Identify resource, time and INSET needs.
- Give brief details of how you will evaluate the progress made on each target.

★ It may be useful for the whole department, and will certainly be helpful for individual teachers, if you can decide on a method for each of the targets. In other words, **how** will you go about achieving your goals?

- What strategies do you need to use?
- Whom can you call on for help?
- Where can you obtain additional information?
- What resources are available?

It may not be possible, given the short time allotted for Activity 1, to produce anything more than the sketchiest outline of the methods to be used in achieving various targets. It may therefore be thought useful to do this in a separate session when each target might be discussed in more detail.

ACTIVITY 2

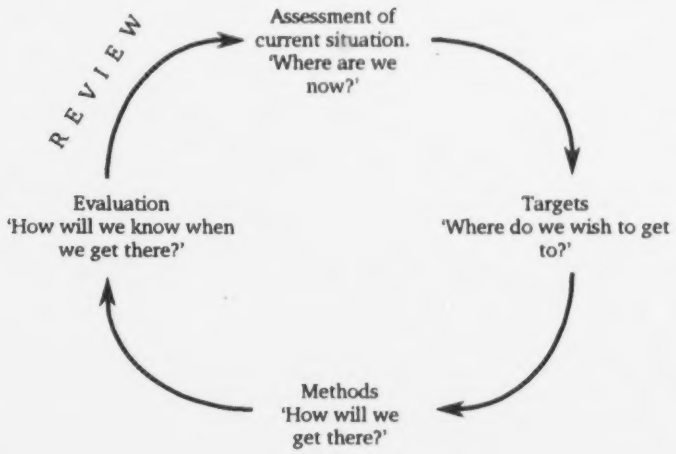
Longer-term targets

Use a second session for identifying longer-term targets for the development plan. At this stage, discussion of methods is not quite so critical.

It is important that progress towards the targets be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals and that the 'state of play' be assessed towards the end of the school year, so that the following year's plan can be debated and drawn up. Some targets may not have been fully achieved and may need to be carried over.

In this way, by making use of structured development plans, the department moves forward in steady stages and achieves what it can when it can.

Finally, it may help to be reminded of the normal cycle of planning; it will be seen that this is a continuous process.


REVIEW
Assessment of current situation. 'Where are we now?'
Targets 'Where do we wish to get to?'
Methods 'How will we get there?'
Evaluation 'How will we know when we get there?'

4. The scheme of work

As Laurie Kershook has pointed out in PATHFINDER 3, the scheme of work is an essential planning tool for departments. His definition of what purposes the scheme of work serves is worth repeating here;

it will be:

- a tool for developing coherent ideas on policy, methodology, priorities, subject matter, etc;
- a basis for pooling expertise, sharing workloads and apportioning responsibility;
- a means of ensuring a cohesion of approach, objectives, teaching methods and standards among colleagues;
- a device for monitoring the effectiveness of current practice;
- a means of expressing the department's work to other departments, to newly-appointed colleagues, to headteachers and curriculum managers, parents, governors, advisers and inspectors;
- a device for interpreting into practice the guidelines of local policies, national criteria, National Curriculum, desirable methodology, etc.

This book is not intended to deal with all the aspects of the scheme of work. They are more than adequately covered elsewhere, especially in PATHFINDER 3 and in the National Association of Language Advisers (NALA) booklet on the topic*. My aim is to concentrate on those areas which pertain directly to the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Perhaps the major priority for languages departments over the next few years is to update and revise schemes of work to bring them into line with the new requirements. For many departments, and especially those which have already produced comprehensive schemes, the task will be relatively painless, for the process of putting together a working document is already known, there may already be on-going discussions on methodology and assessment strategies, and teachers may already have developed a coherent departmental approach to and philosophy of language teaching. Such items as aims and objectives may need little revising, and established departmental policies on recording achievement, for example, **may** continue to meet the needs of pupils, parents and teachers with only minor amendments.

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* Your local adviser/inspector will be able to give you more details of this booklet.

As has been stated before, the National Curriculum seeks to build on such existing good practice. It will not be a question of re-inventing the wheel, as the next section hopes to show.

Of course, there will be other departments where the level of planning and the adoption of similar approaches are not so well developed. **Where this is the case, it is important that teachers start on the process of joint planning and the production of a detailed scheme of work with some urgency.**

It is worth stressing once again that the scheme of work is an extensive document. It takes time to produce: it cannot be done overnight or on the basis of one or two meetings; rather, it should involve the entire department working collaboratively over a long period of time. It may take up to a year to complete the programmes of work for each successive school year, for example.

Laurie Kershook's list of criteria defining the basic framework of the scheme of work is valuable:

- the whole department must have ownership of the scheme, as a result of a collaborative and consultative development process;
- the process of development of the scheme must at the same time grow naturally out of the department's work, and also inform and influence it. It must be closely linked to the department's development, in the context of national requirements, local and school-specific policies, and changes in the function and methods of modern language teaching;
- the scheme needs to connect coherently with the overall curriculum objectives of both the individual school and the LEA's concerted approach to teaching;
- it must show how it relates to National Curriculum criteria, both subject-specific and cross-curricular;
- it must be effectively and clearly presented, to a high reprographic standard, in a format which is accessible and practical.

Finally, it should be remembered that the scheme of work is a working document. Everybody should have a copy of it and it should be referred to constantly; it is the tool by which the department translates good theory into good practice. Of course, circumstances change, and there is therefore a need to review and, if necessary, update the scheme on a yearly basis, in the light of experience. A loose-leaf format probably serves this purpose best, so that new sections or amendments can easily be incorporated.

This sounds like a life sentence! Indeed, much hard work and thought necessarily goes into the production of a scheme of work. The benefits to pupils and staff alike, however, far outweigh any disadvantages. And once the department has an effective, workable scheme, it becomes an easy job to amend it and update it as circumstances and experience dictate.

5. National Curriculum: statutory elements

The statutory elements of the National Curriculum, which all children aged 11-16 must cover, are as follows:

1. Programmes of Study (PoS)

    a. General requirements
    b. Part I: learning and using the target language
    c. Part II: Areas of Experience (AoE)

2. Attainment Targets (ATs)

For each attainment target, there are ten levels of attainment, each one defined by a number of Statements of Attainment (SoA).

> It is, perhaps, unfortunate that in the statutory orders the attainment targets appear **before** the programmes of study, for the attainment targets merely represent the framework through which the programmes will be assessed. This could give the impression that the languages curriculum is 'assessment-led'.
>
> There is a grave danger in this that teachers will teach to the attainment targets, whereas it is the programmes of study which should be taken as the starting point; assessment needs to be built carefully into the teaching programme, but it is important first of all to define the essential experiences all pupils should have and the actual teaching content, which offer far greater breadth and depth than the attainment targets. For this reason, I have reversed the order of programmes of study and attainment targets above.

It will be essential to incorporate these statutory elements into the scheme of work.

6. Curriculum audits

Given that teachers are required by law to cover the programmes of study and attainment targets, one of the first tasks the department needs to do in preparing for the National Curriculum is to identify how its current practice matches the statutory requirements. To do this, a curriculum audit is needed.

The audit described below is merely an example. National Curriculum non-statutory guidance will offer alternative versions. Each department will choose an auditing instrument suited to its own needs. The one used below has proved useful as a starting point for many teachers, however.

ACTIVITY 3: Curriculum audit (PoS, Part I)

On the adjoining pages (pp 16-19), each of the 76 activities from PoS Part I has been numbered for ease of reference. These numbers appear on the blank audit grids on pp 20-23. The left-hand column of the audit grid (headed 'Communicative activities') has been left blank.

- Photocopy the blank grids so that every teacher in the department has a copy.
- As a department, suggest a few common communicative activities which you **all** do fairly regularly with year 7 pupils. These might include, for example, class and individual repetition, role-play, flashcards, aural gap-fillers, information gap, and so on. Aim to include activities from all four skill areas and if possible mixed-skill tasks. Note your suggestions in the left-hand column (the same suggestions on both sheets!).
- In pairs, match the communicative activities against the 76 PoS elements. Where you think an activity meets the National Curriculum element, put a tick in the column, thus:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 etc
Role-play	✓	✓			? ✓	✓	✓
Use of OHP for oral stimulus	✓		✓	✓ ?			✓

Where an activity **may** meet the requirement, depending on the level, or the content, put a question mark.

*Note: Work **down** the columns for greater speed and consistency.*

- At this stage, this is merely a sampling exercise, so after about fifteen minutes on sheet 1, during which you should try to cover all four skill areas in the PoS, move on to sheet 2 for ten minutes. THERE IS NO NEED TO COMPLETE THE SHEETS.
- Compare results and discuss your findings, as a department.

Programme of Study Model A

Part I : Learning and using the target language

Communicating in the target language

Links with:	In **speaking** the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT2	1 practise and develop their pronunciation and intonation; 2 communicate information which is not known to the listener; 3 describe everyday activities and narrate events; 4 make comparisons; 5 express personal feelings and opinions; 6 develop and justify their own ideas and opinions;
AT2 and AT1	7 ask and answer questions; 8 find out and give information; 9 ask about meanings, seek clarification or repetition; 10 give and ask for explanations and instructions; 11 take part in structured and less structured role-play; 12 initiate and sustain conversations, some of which contain unpredictable elements; 13 discuss their own interests and experiences and compare them with those of others; 14 discuss an increasingly wide range of issues and ideas; 15 adjust language to suit context, audience and purpose;
AT2 and AT1/ AT3	16 summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts; 17 express agreement and disagreement; 18 use what they hear or read as a stimulus for speaking.

Links with:	In **writing** the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT4	19 copy phrases, sentences and short texts; 20 communicate information which is not known to the reader; 21 describe everyday activities and narrate events; 22 make comparisons; 23 express personal feelings and opinions;

AT4 cont'd	24	develop and justify their own ideas and opinions;
	25	write about their own interests and experiences and compare them with those of others;
	26	discuss an increasingly wide range of issues and ideas;
	27	vary language to suit context, audience and purpose;
	28	produce a variety of types of writing (*e.g. connected sentences and paragraphs, stories, poems, songs, diaries, letters*) for various audiences, including other learners;
AT4 and AT3	29	ask and answer questions;
	30	find out and give information;
	31	seek clarification;
	32	give and ask for explanations and instructions;
	33	redraft their own writing to improve its accuracy and presentation;
	34	redraft an existing written text (including their own) for a different audience or purpose;
AT4 and AT1/ AT3	35	make notes from what they hear or read;
	36	summarise and report the main points of spoken or written texts;
	37	express agreement and disagreement;
	38	use what they hear or read as a stimulus for their own writing;
AT4 and AT1, 2,3	39	record and express information in different forms (*e.g. text, tables, charts, graphs*), for different audiences.

Understanding and responding

Links with:	In **listening** to the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:	
AT1	40	listen attentively;
	41	follow clear directions and instructions;
	42	interpret the meaning of language with the help of visual and other non-verbal clues;
	43	use the context of what they hear as a guide to meaning;
	44	listen for gist and detail to identify and abstract information;
AT1 and AT2/ AT4	45	respond to different types of spoken language (*e.g. songs, rhymes, poems, plays, messages, instructions, dialogues, conversations, narratives and reports from the media or live sources, extracts from news items, interviews and documentaries*).

Links with:	In **reading** the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT3	46 follow clear directions and instructions; 47 interpret the meaning of language with the help of visual and other non-verbal clues; 48 use the context of what they read as a guide to meaning; 49 skim texts for gist and scan for detail to identify and extract information; 50 read extensively for personal interest;
AT3 and AT2/ AT4	51 respond to different types of written text, of varying lengths (*e.g. signs, notices, postcards, letters, short stories, poems, diaries, brochures, newspaper or magazine articles, extracts from authentic imaginative writing*).

Developing language learning skills and awareness of language

Links with:	In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT 1,2, 3,4	52 learn phrases by heart; 53 learn (and at times recite) short texts (*e.g. rhymes, poems, songs, jokes or tongue twisters*); 54 learn how sounds are represented in writing; 55 develop their awareness of the different conventions of the written and spoken language; 56 increase their awareness of different language forms and registers; 57 use knowledge about language (linguistic patterns, structures, grammatical features and relationships, and compound words and phrases) to infer meaning and develop their own use of language; 58 infer meaning; 59 interpret in both directions between the target language and another language (*e.g. interpret between two people speaking different languages*).

Developing cultural awareness

Links with	In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:
AT 1,2, 3,4	60 come into contact with native speakers in this country and (where possible) abroad;

AT 1,2, 3,4 cont'd

61 work with authentic materials from the countries or communities of the target language (*e.g. from link schools abroad or schools in this country*);
62 consider and discuss the similarities and differences between their own culture and those of the countries and communities where the target language is spoken;
63 identify with the experiences and perspectives of people in these countries and communities (*e.g. in role-play or creative writing*);
64 learn the use of social conventions (*e.g. forms of address and greetings*) and become increasingly aware of cultural attitudes as expressed in language;

and during Key Stage 4, pupils should also have the opportunity to:

65 investigate, discuss and report on aspects of the language and culture of these countries or communities.

Developing the ability to work with others

Links with: AT 1,2, 3,4

In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

66 plan and carry out practical and creative activities with a partner or in a group;
67 conduct surveys and other investigations in the class, school or outside;
68 interview each other, adults and (where possible) native speakers;
69 take part in language games;
70 take part in improvised drama;

and during Key Stage 4, pupils should also have the opportunity to:

71 work on extended joint assignments with other members of a group;
72 use the target language in a real or simulated adult working environment.

Developing the ability to learn independently

Links with: AT 1,2, 3,4

In learning and using the target language, pupils should have regular opportunities to:

73 work independently of the teacher (on their own and with others);
74 use a range of reference materials and resources (*e.g. glossaries, exercise books, textbooks, bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, indexes, encyclopaedias*);
75 use computers (*e.g. for language games, problem-solving, information retrieval, word-processing, drafting and redrafting, desktop publishing and communicating via electronic mail*);
76 develop independence in their choice of tasks, materials, and use of equipment (*e.g. audio and video recorders and video cameras*).

	SPEAKING																	
COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Class repetition																		

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WRITING																					LISTENING						READING						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51

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	Developing language learning skills & awareness of language								Developing cultural awareness						Developing the ability to work with others						
COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	* 65	66	67	68	69	70	* 71	* 72
Class repetition																					

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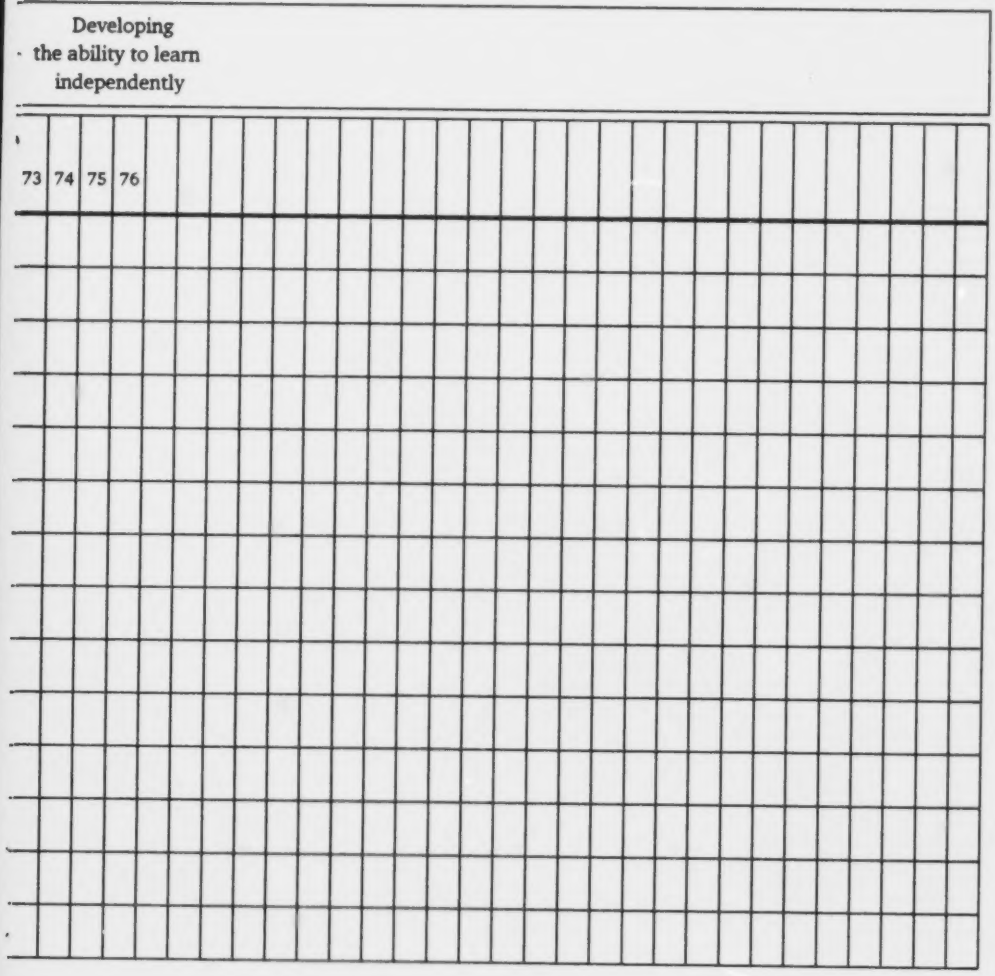
*=KS4 only



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This exercise not only enables you to familiarise yourself with the programme of study, but also provides you with much information about how well your current teaching matches the requirements. You will have identified several gaps, but you will also have learned that much of the National Curriculum is covered by what you already do.

At this stage, the exercise might be considered a fairly crude instrument; you may have found that certain activities required a tighter definition, or that you needed to debate in several instances whether or not a particular PoS opportunity was 'covered'.

To refine the process, a 'control group' exercise is suggested.

Control group exercise 1: programmes of study

Taking year 7 classes as the control group, teachers simply make a note of any activities they use over a given period of say about a month. These should be written up either at the end of the lesson or at the end of the week, and the department then needs to meet to identify and discuss the range of tasks/activities used by individual teachers in the time. It is important to identify all activities/sub-activities and where possible to relate these to any textbooks or other materials used. The range of activities is then matched against the PoS requirements from Part I (*Learning and using the target language*) using the audit grid, and also against the areas of experience.

After a month of such collation and analysis, departments will have gathered a wealth of information to show how well they are already meeting the PoS and, perhaps more significantly, where the gaps are. Activities can then be planned to fill in missing areas. Such an audit also allows the department to see where its textbooks are deficient.

This experiment can be carried on with other year groups as time allows until a comprehensive picture of National Curriculum coverage is obtained.

Inevitably, according to the strengths of your department, you will find some columns where only one or two ticks occur, and others with a lot of ticks. This tells you about the breadth and balance of the activities and experiences you currently offer the children. Of course, some of the 76 elements are easier to provide on a regular basis than others; it may not be easy to give pupils regular opportunities 'to come into contact with native speakers', for example.

Nonetheless, where some elements appear to have minimal coverage, departments should try to provide more of these, or to offer them more frequently, in order to achieve greater balance and breadth. Whilst no hierarchy is implied amongst these PoS elements, your department may decide that some of

them are more worthy of attention than others, or more achievable. This is fine, but do remember that the PoS represents **an entitlement** for every child, and that Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) may expect children to have covered them in some depth.

You should plan to include a fair sprinkling of the PoS Part I elements throughout all your teaching; clearly, no-one can expect you to practise all the opportunities/activities in one lesson, or even in one week! It will be important, however, to ensure that there is adequate coverage of all the elements by each child in each year group. Mixed-skill activities are likely to give greater scope for coverage of the opportunities, on the whole.

Areas of experience

In conducting the audit, it will also be necessary to take account of your coverage of the areas of experience, and to consider how to offer breadth and balance here too. (See under 'Topic area planning' below.)

It seems that area F: *The international world* and area G: *The world of imagination and creativity* are the ones which most departments will need to develop.

You **must** cover or 'visit' each area in each key stage. However, in terms of breadth and balance and of the entitlement of the pupils, it would seem preferable to cover each area in each year, if this is possible.

Area G, *The world of imagination and creativity,* can stand on its own, or it could be incorporated into all of the other areas. For example, it would be possible in area C, *The world around us,* to do a topic on 'Life in a village'. This could incorporate songs and poems about a village and, perhaps, impressionist pictures of village life and short simple descriptions of villages taken from literature. Thus, the creative, imaginative element would have been adequately covered, at least from one perspective.

Equally, it would be possible to study the impressionist paintings in their own right, as a stand-alone topic on 'Drawing and painting'. Either approach would seem to be valid.

Area E, *The world of communications,* is another area which could lend itself to similar treatment.

Control group exercise 2: attainment targets

It will be important for departments to build into their teaching programmes activities which will allow pupils access to the ATs. Clearly, children must be given the opportunity to reach specified levels of attainment, so the assessment framework of the ATs is very important.

To identify which assessment activities the department is currently providing and to measure how well pupils are doing against the criteria, a second control group can be established. It will be better to do this after the first exercise is completed.

Again using year 7, select three/four children from one or two classes (a mixture of abilities). For each child assemble a folder of work over, say, a month: this will include oral work recorded on tape. As a department, review the work done and check what progress has been made.

What constitutes progression for this girl?
What has she learned?

and most importantly,

Where does she go from here?

It will be important to mark new work in the context of previous work, rather than as individual items, in order to check on what progress has been made.

Having done the exercise, the department will have a better idea of how its current programmes of work offer progression and will also know which opportunities it has provided for the pupils to reach which statements of attainment. It will also be possible to say which levels those particular children would have reached had they been tested against the criteria.

In this exercise, the department is identifying gaps retrospectively, but this helps enormously to plan ahead for implementation of the PoS and ATs. Planned inclusion of the assessment activities in the overall teaching programme, linked closely to teaching and learning objectives, will be necessary before the requirements are implemented.

Again, this exercise is a useful one to try with other groups of chidren higher up the school.

7. Topic area planning

The National Curriculum does not specify any content for modern languages, so schools have an enormous amount of freedom to teach what they want and what their children need, provided that the PoS and ATs are covered. How this will fit in with a national system of assessment remains to be seen, of course!

It will be necessary for departments to specify the content they will teach in the scheme of work. **Topic areas** remain the most logical framework for organising the teaching and detailing the content. It may also be useful to think in terms of **themes**, particularly with older pupils. A theme, by my definition, is a grouping of several topics, which would allow for the transference of acquired language and skills between individual topic areas (an element often missing from Graded Assessment schemes), and for the coverage of several areas of experience.

Thus, a year 9 group might spend a term studying the **theme** of holidays, which could include topics on booking tickets and transport, accommodation arrangements, food and drink, leisure-time activities, meeting and talking to people, and geography.

When planning which topic areas to cover, the department will obviously want to consider its current resources, any possible new courses it might purchase, GCSE syllabuses and topics which it teaches at present.

It is advisable to plan the topics for a whole year at a time; this provides teachers with an overview of the year's programme and allows planned coverage of a range of areas of experience, building in breadth and balance from the outset. Thus, the sudden urgent need to 'bolt on' an extra topic, or include hastily prepared work towards the end of the year when it is realised that, say, area E has not been covered(!), is avoided. Equally, the department is able to schedule the whole languages curriculum experience for the children and to identify where there may be important gaps.

It will also be possible to consult other departments at the planning stage to see whether there are any possibilities for cross-curricular links; when is the geography department studying 'Our town'? Is it possible to tie our languages work in with theirs?

The plan on p 28 is a draft version of one to be included in the National Curriculum Council's non-statutory guidance. It shows a year's plan for year 7. All areas of experience are included. Note the recommendation that area G should permeate all other areas of experience.

The idea that some of the last half-term could be devoted to an extended project (or perhaps a theme, as mentioned above) is an interesting one worth exploring. This would allow revision of all the previous topics which then become linked, and it could allow further coverage of the creative and practical elements and further opportunities for cross-curricular work.

Example from a scheme of work (key stage 3/year 7) planning timetable

YEAR 7		Topics	Title of unit of work	Main AoE*
T	1	1 Personal details 2 People in my class 3 The rules and language of the classroom	myself and my class	A/B
		1 The school day 2 School subjects 3 Jobs and careers	my school	A/D
E	2	1 Places and buildings 2 Direction-finding 3 Shops and other businesses 4 Money and shopping	our town	C/D
R		1 My family 2 My house 3 Homes in other countries 4 Designing a dream house	my home	C/G
M	3	1 Languages around the world 2 Sending messages 3 Receiving messages	links abroad	E/F
		E.g. revision extended project school visit or trip		

*AoE G should permeate all other AoE to a greater or lesser extent. In addition, AoE E may provide contexts for other topics.

Source: *National Curriculum Council*

We need to be aware, however, of the need for progression and continuity. Does the programme **as a whole** allow children to make progress - whether in terms of knowledge and breadth of vocabulary, ability to manipulate language, increasing accuracy, increasing independence, and so on?

Establishing the programme for year 7 is clearly the first priority. Once this is done, departments might usefully consider mapping out a programme for all five years of a language course. Whilst this might eventually be subject to change as SATs and new GCSEs come on stream, it would permit the department to chart a child's progress through the topic areas, would show how topic areas might be revised and/or 'revisited' at higher levels (and thus help to take account of the 'cyclic and spiral' nature of language learning), and might point the way forward to the possible content of KS4 courses. Also, it would serve to illustrate how progression and continuity might be achieved across the five years.

Individual topic areas

The final stage in the planning process is to get to grips with the details of individual topics. This will be a new departure for many departments.

We should consider that the PoS and ATs represent an entitlement which is due to each pupil. It makes sense, therefore, to identify the essential experiences which all children should have; joint planning of the topic area makes this possible, because it provides for a large degree of close harmonisation between teachers.

TOPIC GRIDS

Some teachers might feel daunted by the topic web approach, as illustrated in the working party report *Modern foreign languages for ages 11 to 16* (October 1990). You may prefer the more structured, more rigid framework suggested below:

YEAR _____ CLASS

1. LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (CORE)	2. LANGUAGE STRUCTURES (EXTENSION)	3. CORE ACTIVITIES	4. DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES	
			INTER-MEDIATE	HIGHER

_____ TOPIC/THEME _____

5. SKILLS DEVELOPED/ CROSS-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES	6. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES	7. RESOURCES/ MATERIALS	8. AREAS OF EXPERIENCE	9. PoS PART I	10. ATs SoAs

ACTIVITY 4: Topic grid

Work as a department. Enlarge the grid and give everyone a copy.

- Decide on the **content** you wish to include in the topic/theme. This will consist of the linguistic objectives (structures, vocabulary, functions and notions) and cultural background knowledge. You will be able to find ideas for this in GCSE and Graded Assessment syllabuses and in your textbooks.

  There is room on the grid only for the essential language structures. Brainstorm these, then try to arrange them in some kind of progression according to level of difficulty, **before** writing them on the grid.

  Add differentiated (extension) structures for more able children.

- Brainstorm the teaching activities you would normally use to teach this topic - then match these to the PoS Part I and decide which are **essential** for all learners. This is the core. Where possible match these activities across the grid against the structures*.

  Decide on two additional levels of differentiated activity, to meet the needs of children of different ability.

- Identify the skills to be developed and any cross-curricular skills or opportunities.

- Build in a range of assessment activities, carefully linked to the teaching objectives.

- Match the contents of the grid against the areas of experience, PoS Part I, and the ATs and SoAs (within a limited range of levels, according to the year being targeted).

  Where there are glaringly obvious gaps in the statutory elements, attempt to fill some with other activities and assessment tasks, but remember that other topics will offer further different opportunities.

** The purpose of this activity is to ensure that all learners within a year group receive quintessentially the same core experiences, though with differentiated activities as appropriate. Different teachers will obviously approach activities in different ways, according to their strengths and teaching styles; some will add on extra bits here and there - using a display or an empty wine-bottle as a visual aid, jumping from the table to illustrate the perfect tense(!) - whatever it may be!*

This is as it should be; nobody wants to limit the individual teacher's creativity and inspiration, nor to impose certain teaching styles. Nonetheless, defining the

experiences and activities which all children should have will help to ensure that each child receives his/her entitlement in languages. It is also ***most important*** *for the department to agree on its criteria for assessment and on what constitutes an agreed level of attainment; comparability of standards is the order of the day! This will be much easier if a certain range of activities is defined in advance.*

A coherent, departmental approach to the planning of topic areas should also encourage much valuable discussion about methodology and resources. Teachers will be able to share their ideas and their anxieties.

Planning individual topic areas in this way will probably require at least two one-hour meetings, and most teachers will not welcome the thought of having to do this for five/six topics in each year. Some might argue that new textbooks will do most of this work anyway.

There are real dangers in this:

- ★ many departments will not immediately be able to afford new materials and their existing ones may well be inadequate for meeting National Curriculum requirements;
- ★ many departments now use a resource-based approach not linked to any textbook in particular;
- ★ the textbook will help to define much of the content (vocabulary, structures, etc) of the course, but no textbook is perfect and there will be much of local interest or which meets the particular needs of your pupils which cannot be covered by it;
- ★ does every teacher use the textbook in roughly the same way? Ms Smith seems to stick rigidly to its presentation. Mr Brown develops ideas from the teacher's book. And does Mrs Patel not use the book as a framework, but with lots of her own ideas and extra materials added on? Are all children getting the same essential experience?
- ★ does your new textbook do everything the National Curriculum demands?

A solution for some departments would be to use the textbook as a base for the content and the topic coverage, but to go through the planning process as described above regardless, to ensure a cohesiveness of approach, methodology, essential activities and assessment, and supplementing the book with additional content as considered necessary. The discussion itself, whatever the mode decided upon, remains invaluable.

How many topics should be planned in this way?

Ideally, all of them! In this way, as each year works progressively through the National Curriculum, the department will build up a comprehensive picture of its work, and of how pupils should progress through it. If each completed sheet for each topic area is inserted in the scheme of work, staff will be able to refer back to work covered previously and, ultimately, to plan ahead for the next topic with certain classes.

Colour-coding for each year group would be a useful aid. You may even like to decorate the walls of your stockroom or office with the sheets to make an easy-reference wall-chart!

Different classes progress at different rates, so as children move up the school, it may be thought necessary to complete separate sheets for certain classes, perhaps where setting or some other form of ability differentiation has occurred.

Again, many colleagues will feel aghast at the thought of so much planning work. When will we find time to teach? It is worth remembering, however, that in National Curriculum terms you need only progress one year at a time and from 1992 there will be a full five years before the whole age-range is following the PoS and ATs. Whilst it would be useful to plan the topics you currently teach to years 8-11 in this way, in practice you may have little time for this. **Concentrate, then, on getting year 7 right first**, then year 8, and so on. For actual implementation of year 7 work (from September 1992) you may only need to have two (or three) topics planned ready for the first term. As the term unfolds, you can discuss the details for succeeding terms, and so on.

If you can plan more topics in advance, then do so, but remember that you may need to make amendments with experience once you are teaching the National Curriculum.

Self-evaluation and review

No scheme of work is immutable. On the contrary, most need fairly regular updating; if you have worked through the suggestions outlined in this book, however, or similar ones, your scheme of work will be thorough and should be a valuable tool to help you teach the National Curriculum effectively. There should only need to be minor tinkering with it as time and Secretaries of State(!) progress.

But your department will be the stronger, if from the outset you can build into the planning process mechanisms for review and self-evaluation.

Ask yourselves questions such as these:

- ★ How are we doing?
- ★ How are we meeting the targets in our development plan?
- ★ How well are we implementing the National Curriculum?

- ★ How well does the scheme of work match our aims and objectives, and how well does the teaching match the scheme of work?
- ★ How well are the children learning?
- ★ What can we do to improve? Where do we go from here?

All teachers review their work, of course. To suggest otherwise would be an insult to your professionalism. In any case, questions such as these will occur naturally in the course of your meetings and your day-to-day work. I would recommend, however, that a meeting devoted to evaluation and review should be held towards the end of every term, so that the next stage in the planning cycle can be broached.

Conclusion

I am conscious that this book has promised you nothing but blood, sweat, toil and tears. I hope you will forgive me this, as it is offered in the genuine belief that thorough planning will help departments to teach the National Curriculum (and any other languages programme) more effectively, that all teachers will benefit from the discussions and the mutual support engendered, and that our pupils, ultimately, will be the winners.

I would stress three main messages:

1 DON'T PANIC!
Establish your priorities and set reasonable time-scales in which to achieve them. Aim to do **a few** things well. Time is on your side.

2 Remember that much of what you are already doing is worthwhile, and build on this. There is no need to start afresh.

3 Do work as a team and support one another, and do call on others - senior management team, advisers, colleagues from other schools - to help, if necessary.

Good luck

Departmental planning is an essential part of teaching, and pupils and teachers alike stand to gain from an approach which is carefully thought through and cohesively delivered.

The author suggests ideas and tasks which will help in producing effective schemes of work. He supports these by presenting a series of activities which will enable departments to prepare thoroughly for the National Curriculum.

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